The Value of Moon Myth in Sylvia Plath's Poetry

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The present study aims at studying the moon myth in Sylvia Plath's poetry. The presence of the moon in her early poetry was associated with nature according to her mood, emotions and senses. Plath had used Robert Graves's *The White Goddess* myth as her Moon –Muse to represent sterility, barrenness, rivalry, cruelty and indifference in her late poetry. The moon myth was always female and had a great connection to Plath's personal life as female to represent her as a young girl, wife, pregnant woman, and mother, then after separation from her husband Ted Hughes.

القيمة ألأسطورية للقمر في شعر سلفيا بلاث

تهدف الدراسة الحالية لدراسة أسطورة القمر في شعر سلفيا بلاث. أن وجود القمر في شعرها المبكر كان ممتزجا مع الطبيعة حسب مزاجها وعواطفها ومشاعرها. ولقد استخدمت بلاث أسطورة ألالهة البيضاء لروبرت كريفز كألهة للقمر لتجسد العقم والعقر والند والقساوة وعدم المبالاة في شعرها المتاخر. وكان القمر دائما انثى ويرتبط بشكل كبير مع حياة بلاث ليمثلها كفتاة شابه وزوجة وامرأة حامل وأم. ومن ثم بعد انفصالها من زوجها تيد هيوز.

Sylvia Plath (1932-1963) was an American poet, novelist and short story writer. Since her death, her controversial life story and writings have become battle grounds on which biographers, critics, feminists, antifeminists, psychoanalysts, and others have all fought to stake their differing claims. They have taken a biographical and psychoanalytical approach to Plath's poetry because it entangled in a fascination with her broken marriage and suicide; and the use of psychological and mythological images in her poetry.[1] Her first book of poetry , *The Colossus* (1960), contains a biographical elements cast in terms of Greek myth and drama. It was Plath's early poems written between 1956 and the end of 1959 and the only collection of poetry published during her lifetime. *Ariel* (1965) was Plath's last poems which impressed themselves on many readers with the force of myth and were published after her death by her husband Ted Hughes. *Crossing the Water* (1971) were considered as transitional poems written in the final stage of Plath's first phase of poetry. *Winter Trees* (1971) and *Ariel* (1965) were largely represented the poetry of last years of Plath's life.

Most of people believe in myths since they did not find any outlet for their troubles and needs. As we know that the idea of myth is completely different from legend, the first is related to supernatural phenomenon whereas the second refers to historical events or incidents. Myth represents always an idealized conception or idea. Some people and particularly the poets resort for the use of myths in their writings when they find themselves unable to accomplish their desires and hopes. She is seen as an extremely traditional poet. Not, of course, in the sense Sylvia sees tradition as unchanging force to which she should submit herself but in the sense that she sees the tradition of poetry as a living and growing force, which must be constantly extended in order to be kept vitally alive.

Plath's poetry was not mainly literal or confessional; it was the produce of mythic system which is drawn from her personal life. It was not biography played no part in her poetry ,but her biography was mythicized.[2]Ted Hughes had remarked that Plath's poems were like 'chapters in a mythology' which even if the origins and *dramatis persona* were enigmatic, shared a 'single center of power and light.'[3] The moon as a symbol was one of the most striking elements in

Plath's mythic system. There were more than one hundred direct references to the moon in Plath's poetry.

Not only with poetry, Plath was familiar with literary and psychoanalytic archetypes and symbols through her psychotherapy which had encouraged her to perceive life in terms of certain psychoanalytic myths and to be more keenly aware of the extent to which life is mythic. She also had discernible sources drawn from her very completely assimilated reading of C.G .Jung, Otto Rank, Sigmund Freud, Sir James Frazer and Robert Graves.

The subjects of her early poems began as romance, lost love, adolescent humiliations, and high school union initiations yet ended with withdrawal, a bleak note, and an ironic remoteness from the usual adolescent conclusion. In Plath's early poetry the moon had a denotative meaning which occurred hyphenated with adjectival values. The moon appeared as 'moon –stuck' in an earliest poem "A Mad Girl's Love Song" (August 1953), it was Plath's favorite villanelle published in *Mademoiselle* (p.358) when she was a student at Smith. This poem was about the temporary blindness induced by love which had a self-explanatory and completely conventional expressive meaning of insane:

I dreamed that you bewitched me into be
And sung me moon-struck, kissed me quite insane.(ll.7-8)[4]

When Sylvia Plath was asked by Peter Orr about the sort of poems she wrote in her adolescent, she said they were about:

Nature, I think :birds, bees, spring, fall, all those subjects which are
absolute gifts to the person who doesn't have any interior experience to write about. I
think the coming of spring , the stars overhead, the first snowfall and so on are gifts for a
child , a young poet.[5]

For Sylvia Plath, Nature meant the landscape, the countryside, as opposed to the town and it might be extended to cover the sun, moon, and stars in Plath's poetry. The descriptions of landscape and the use of nature imagery was very common in Plath's poetry which came from her fascination and knowledge of nature that appeared as a well-defined observations of natural phenomena done

with a keen eye for the striking details. The following lines shows Sylvia Plath's depiction of a landscape when she was at Smith on May 15, 1952:

> **I remember a cool river beach and a May night full of rain held in far clouds,**
> **moonly sparks raying on the water, and the close, dank, heavy wetness of green**
> **vegetation. The water was cold to my bare feet, and the mud oozed up between**
> **my toes". (Unabridged Journals, p.104).[6]**

The moon was greatly associated with the landscape in Plath's early poetry. Some of Plath's poems indicated a delicate detailed landscape of the world of vegetation and animal life with qualified approval. An example is her "Watercolour of Grantchester Meadows" (19 February, 1959) from *The Colossus* . It was a poem on an English landscape which Plath described as "a pleasant …which I wrote bucolically … and … the only "love" poem in my book" (Unabridged Journals, p.477). The scenery described was an idyllic countryside and "very familiar to the residents and students of Cambridge, namely, the low meadows on the River Granta close to the village Grantchester".[7] She had used the adjective 'moony' to describe two lover students who were blind and deaf even to death , they were not conscious of what was going around them. The students' 'moony indolence of love' functioned as a highly effective contrast to the owl's sudden attack on the water- rat .The adjective 'moony' acquired some suggestion of unrealistic or inattentive.

> **While the students stroll or sit,**
> **Hands laced, in a moony indolence of love-**
> **Black –gowned, but unaware**
> **How in such mild air**
> **The owl shall stoop from his turret, the rat cry out. (ll.24-28))[8]**

A.E. Dyson comments on "Watercolour of Grantchester Meadows" in his essay "On Sylvia Plath" as :

> **Even the students, lost in a 'moony indolence of love', are unmenaced ,and therefore**

somewhat unreal. 'It is a country on a nursery plate', a pretty place but Sylvia Plath
was more at home when she sensed behind nature its naked inhospitality to man.[9]

"Hardcastle Crags" (Spring 1957) is from *The Colossus*, in which Plath was inspired by the desolate moorland in West Yorkshire that Emily Bronte had depicted in *Wuthering Heights*. Hardcastle Crags showed her reactions to Hughes's native Yorkshire which is a deep narrow valley in the Pennines moors in West Yorkshire. The rocky village she described was on a hilltop overlooking this Valley and very ancient .[10]

The moon is hyphenated and part of the landscape 'moon –blued' and 'moon-bound'. Plath was wandering out from hilltop village to the open countryside at night, the moon-lit fields and the misty valley strike her as unfamiliar and strange. She was completely aware and conscious of the pressure of nature around her:

Flintlike, her feet struck
Such a racket of echoes from the steely street,
Tacking moon –blued crooks from the black
Stone-built town, that she heard from the quick air ignite. (ll.1-4)

In the third stanza the 'moon' is associated with the sea to represent freedom for Plath and to show the moon's control over the sea:

Of the moon ,manes to the wind,
Tireless, tide, as a moon-bound sea
Moves on its root. … (ll.11-13)

Thus, most of Plath's early poems collected in *Colossus* were about nature and the moon was drawn from her understanding of the natural world to be connected with female, she mentioned that when she was at Smith:

Unconsciously, without words, the moon has been identified in my mind with a balloon, yellow, light, and bobbing about on the wind. The moon, according to my mood, is not slim, virginal and silver, but fat, yellow, fleshy and pregnant. Such is the distinction between April and August ,my present physical state and sometimes -in-the-future physical state. Now the moon has undergone a rapid

metamorphoses,….Since my woman's world is perceived greatly through the emotions and the senses, I treat it that way in my writing.(Unabridged Journals, p.87-88).

Sylvia Plath was interested in different kinds of artistic expression and interrelation between various forms of art appeared in poems which belonged to Plath when she was a teacher of English at Smith College (1957-1958). At that time Sylvia was borrowing from a ready- made vision before she developed her own mythology. "Yadwigha, on a Red Couch, Among Lilies" (27 March, 1957), (A sestina for the Douanier) was from *The Colossus* .In this poem Plath Showed her kinship with Primitive Painters and inspired by Rousseau's "Le reve"[11].She described the luxuriant vegetation of Rousseau's jungle and the animals with great conscientiousness and truth. Her attention focused upon the naked woman resting on a red couch to the left of the picture. Rousseau placed the couch in the left of the picture only for its red color accordingly; Plath based the concluding passages of her poem:

Yadwigha, pose on that he put you on the couch
To feed his eyes with red: such red! Under the moon,
In the midst of all that green and those greet lilies! (ll.37-39)

Red was a dominant color which forced itself to the foreground to invade and usurp the attention; the color in this poem is naturally associated with vitality, fertility, and life which had an inherent kinship with the Plath's state of being at that time.[12]

Rousseau's painting and Sylvia Plath's poem were similar in subject matter except for the moon . There was a yellow moon in the painting and Plath mentioned it eight times, at least one time in every stanza. In the first stanza it looks like 'a tropical moon' while, in the second stanza 'without a moon'. In the third stanza, Plath associated 'moon' with the woman to compare it to delicate lilies:

And body whiter than its frill of lilies:
They'd have had yellow silk screening the moon,
Leaves and lilies flattened to paper behind you (ll.14-16)

In the fourth stanza the 'moon' is mentioned as a part of the painting's landscape:

Tigers, snakes, and the snake charmer and you,

And birds of paradise, and the round moon,(ll.23-24)

But, in the fifth stanza the moon is compared to a young woman in her age of vitality 'full of moon'. Then, the yellow color of the moon was similar to the color of the delicate lilies. The moon here is a young naked woman who was delicate, soft, and wet like yellow lilies; moreover the naked woman had the moon's brightness:

Described how you fell dreaming at full of moon
On a red velvet couch within your green-
…
To a beryl jungle, and dreamed that bright moon-lilies
Nodded their petaled heads around your couch. (ll.25-30))

In the sixth stanza the moon again represented young naked woman who is lying on the red couch:

And that, Rousseau told critics, was why the couch
Accompanied you. So they nodded at the couch with the moon(ll.31-32)

Plath was influenced by Robert Graves and her familiarity with Robert Graves came from his book *The White Goddess* and series of lectures at Trinity College Cambridge, in 1954-1955 when Plath was a Fulbright scholar. The White Goddess was the Moon –muse of poetry who oversees life, death, and rebirth. The White Goddess myth was mainly concerned with a Triple Moon- goddess who represented (Hecate, Juno, Diana) encoded some phases in life, death, rebirth cycle as Graves's The White Goddess. According to Graves, the Triple Moon – goddess "was a personification of primitive woman- woman the creator and destructor. As the New Moon or Spring she was girl; as the Full Moon or Summer she was woman; as the Old Moon or Winter she was hag".[13] The colors of the Triple Moon-goddess- white, red, and black which were dominant and symbolic color of Plath's late poems "the New Moon is white Goddess of birth and growth; the Full Moon, the red goddess of love and battle; the Old Moon, the black goddess of death and divination"[14] Robert Graves's *The White Goddess* seemed to order Plath's experience in poetry particularly that of pregnancy and motherhood and her late poetry after separation from Ted Hughes.

Plath's early contact with the White Goddess myth had appeared in "Moonrise" from *The Colossus*, it was probably written in (1959) and built upon the information of Graves's *The White Goddess* and Moon -Muse. The mulberry which ripened from white to red to black was sacred to the White Goddess who had these symbolic colors."Moonrise" followed the ripping mulberries through the changing of their colors which undergone by the moon:

Grub-white mulberries redden among leaves.
I'll go out and sit in white like they do,
Doing nothing. July's juice rounds their nubs.(ll.1-3).

According to the white Goddess myth, the white color of the moon represented death, decay, and infertility which was opposite to the red color of ripeness, maturity, and life. For the White Goddess myth , fertility came through changes from white to red which can implicitly involve death [15]:

Death whitens in the egg and out of it.
I can see no color for this whiteness.
White : it is a complexion of the mind.(ll.19-21)

"Moonrise" was related to the developed experience of the Sylvia's mind and complex imagery because it was appeared in a transitional period between her early and later poetry. So her identification with the White Goddess myth had not yet taken its final form:

Lucina, bony mother, laboring
Among the white stars, your face
Of candour pares white flesh to the white bone,(ll.25-27)

The poem ended with an apostrophe to the moon as Lucina, who was the moon goddess, source of whiteness and associated with childbirth.[16] The final lines referred to Sylvia Plath when she was pregnant with her first child. The moon was clearly connected through the mulberry imagery and the White Goddess with the process of Sylvia Plath's pregnancy:

Who drag our ancient father at the heel,
White –breaded, weary. The berries purple
And bleed. The white stomach may ripen yet.(ll.28-30)

In Plath's later poetry, the Moon –muse was very central and powerful symbol which partially resemble the moon to share in its symbolism. The moon functions seemed to be the central symbol and the deep source of her poetic inspiration and female biology. The moon kept appearing in Plath's poems and in the absence of the actual moon itself, there were its proxies (mannequins, darning –egg , rivals, ova) and its attributes (baldness, coldness, whiteness). There was a natural affinity between the moon and an ovum. The moon like ovum was white, blank, and spherical, and the moon's monthly cycle ruled the cycle of ovulation and menstruation. The Moon, being a woman, had a woman's normal menstrual period of twenty-eight days.

The symbol of Moon –Muse underlined all the aspects of female identity in which ova were seen to resemble moons and the visual appearance of the moon was often connected to female. Each turn of the moon-ruled cycle insures barrenness. These connections were made in "The Munich Mannequins" (28January, 1963) from *Ariel* the ova were seen as barren 'moons' within the moon-ruled bodies of women:

Perfection is terrible, it cannot have children.
Cold as snow breath, it tamps the womb

Where the yew trees blow like hydras,
The tree of life and the tree of life,

Unloosing their moons, month after month, to no purpose.
The blood flood is the blood of love, (ll.1-6) .

In this poem, the moon was an organizing principle; it was evoked by the mention of ova, the female 'moons' for whose infertility the Moon –muse was responsible. Plath became more autobiographical in this poem when she assigned a German cast to the beautiful, heartless, barren woman. It was Plath's great hostility toward Asia Gutman, her husband's stealer. The abstract noun 'perfection' meant beautiful and barren which had connection to Asia who was barren and sterile.[17] Perfection was connected to death and compared to coldness "cold as snow"(l.2). The 'naked and bald'

(l.13) mannequins which like the moon and the unfertile ova were perfected therefore incapable of reproductions which mean sterility. They also meant the purposelessness of the menstrual cycle of Asia which was a monthly sign of sterility and perfection brings only barrenness that was unable to bear children unlike Plath who gave birth to 'children'. The poem implied that the quality of 'perfection' was not only a characteristic of the moon but also power or emanation of it. The yew tree was symbol of death without fruit only menses after menses 'unloosing their moon' which meant sterility.

Ted Hughes had left Sylvia Plath for Assia Gutman, he separated from Plath in 1962. His betrayal had a great effect upon her life and poetry as she considered him to be her equal, lover, and mate. She mentioned that in letters to her mother "What I wanted was inside a person that made you perfectly happy …strong and loving in soul and body. Simple and tough." (Unabridged Journals, p.435). Ted Hughes had represented an ideal male partner to Plath when he had married her , she said "I love his good smell and his body that fits mine as if they were made in the same body- shop to do just that ."(Unabridged Journals, p.434). In another letter she mentioned "Security is inside me & in Ted's warmth. The smell & feel of him is worth a private fortune a year & how lucky I am – there are no rules for this kind of wifeliness –I must make them up as I go along &will do so".(Unabridged Journals, p.412). All that love to Ted Hughes turned to a fury burst loosely in a flood and fiery poems to show her great hatred to Assia and describe her as a different and sterile female.

Plath was a fertile woman who can bore and had children ,she was not like Assia her rival who was infertile. Fertility and barrenness were opposite to the encompassed Moon. They were pivotal in defining the relationship between heroine and rival and between heroines, rival and moon. "Barren Woman" (19 February, 1961) from *Ariel* was occasioned by Plath's own recent miscarriage. In this poem the heroine's lack of fertility did not signify as it did for the rival who was an alliance with the moon, but victimized by it.

Empty, I echo to the least footfall,
Museum without statues, grand with pillars, porticoes, rotundas.

In my courtyard a fountain leaps and sinks back into itself,
Nun –heard and blind to the world. Marble lilies
Exhale their pallor like scent. (ll.1-5)

The description of the "Barren Woman" as a 'museum without statues' having 'pillars, porticoes, rotundas' suggested that her body was merely decorative and functionless architecture. It was not a museum but a marble building empty of statues which can be called mausoleum. She imagined being the 'Mother of white Nike' a mother of white marble statue which was an ironic and ambiguous image.

I imagine myself with a great public,
Mother of a white Nike and several bald –eyed Apollo .
Instead, the dead injure me with attention, and nothing can happen
The moon lays a hand on my forehead,
Blank –faced and mum as a nurse. (ll.6-10)

In the final lines of this poem, the moon was clearly connected to the woman's childlessness. The moon made a gesture as if to comfort her 'lays a hand' on the barren woman's forehead yet, a gesture also made her the victim of this mother. So infertility and barrenness were presented in "Barren Woman" as a profound isolation which isolated the barren woman from other living things.

In "The Rival" (July,1961) from *Ariel* ,the rival was considered as a 'woman in the moon' . Assia Gutman was Sylvia's rival whom she used as a sort of muse – rival in this poem and "The Moon and Yew Tree". Plath portrated Assia as a 'beautiful but annihilating ' like the moon, baleful, stony, and omnipresent, like a disquieting muse:

If the moon smiled, she would resemble you.
You leave the same impression
Of something beautiful but annihilating,
Both of your light borrowers.
Her O –mouth grieves at the world; yours is unaffected,

And your first gift is making stone out of everything.
I wake to a mausoleum; you are here, (ll.1-7)

The rival was like the moon merciless, undecaying, and unavoidable. The rival had the gift of 'making stone out of everything' (l.6) and the 'other' is a stone statue. The moon with its white light seemed cold therefore; the woman who represented should be cold and was like a fixed star frozen, indifferent, and immutable as marble tomb. JudithKroll stated that:

> **Assia Gutman was particularly well qualified because she not only had no children, but was ,apparently, willfully childless, having had several abortions – such a 'sterile beauty' (who had the looks of a model) would be a natural ally of the barren and barrenness –inflicting Moon-muse ,already evident in the poetry. [18]**

"Childless Woman" from *Ariel* (1 December 1962) was written a year after "Barren Woman". The poem expressed the barrenness of Sylvia's rival who was Assia Gutman. The childless woman resembled a work of art but produced neither art nor children. Her womb was not able to conceive children, yet produced the blood of menstruation which led to her sterility and infertile body like a dried plant. Assia's willful childlessness and barrenness after several abortions became as a trait of her organic condition:[19]

> **The womb**
> **Rattles its pod, the moon**
> **Discharges itself from the tree with nowhere to go.(ll.1-3)**

The Moon – Muse was responsible for the woman's infertility to signify her death in life which was Plath's aim in depicting her real rival to ensure her barrenness. The Moon – related deathliness of the rival was similarly portrayed as the barren woman's breasts which were "Gleaming with the mouths of corpses"(l.18):

> **My funeral,**
> **And this hill and this**
> **Gleaming with the mouths of corpses.(ll.16-18).**

"The Other" (2 July, 1962) from *Winter Trees* was also associated with sterility. Plath wrote this poem after meeting her

actual rival Assia, the marble museum had given birth to its 'White Nike':

You come in late, wiping your lips.
What did I leave untouched on the doorstep –

White Nike,
Streaming between my walls? (ll.1-4)

The 'other' was an agent of the moon found in Plath's poem to threaten the female. The rival here is not a mere 'the other woman' but had a more profound otherness, a mythic opposition which embodied the rival's way of being, who was an emanation of the moon- a 'moon-glow'. Plath considered the opposition of childlessness and motherhood to be of crucial significance depending on James Frazer's *The Golden Bough* the barren wife who infected her husband's garden:

The magic virtue of a pregnant woman to communicate fertility…On the mother hand … a barren wife infects her husband's garden with her own sterility & prevent the trees from bearing fruit; hence a childless woman is usually divorced.[20]

Plath regarded sterility as a disease and the menstrual flow was only a sign of sterility and the moon was a symbol of disease and infertility:

Navel cords, blue –red and lucent,
Shrink from my belly like arrows, and these I ride.
O moon- glow, o sick one ,
The stolen horses, the fornications
Circle a womb of marble. (ll.18-22)

The rival in Plath poems maintained beauty and her childlessness and barrenness considered as the main source of her otherness and embodiment of the moon.

The myth of the moon and Sylvia Plath's mother were identical. Plath's archetypal mother was embodied profoundly in "The Moon and the Yew Tree" (22October, 1961) which was from *Ariel* . In this poem ,Sylvia was under the influence of Robert Graves's *The White*

Goddess **and his lectures. Ted Hughes mentioned that in an early one morning, in the dark Plath wrote the poem about "the full moon setting on to a large yew that grows in the churchyard which was opposite to the front of their house."[21] The outer bleakness and loneliness were in concord with the inner loneliness of the persona because her mind became graveyard as she was in a complete despair ''I simply cannot see where there is to get to.''(l.7) The moon did not give relief because it shone above the graveyard as it was the symbol of her sterility and despair. The moon as well as her mother which represented her purposelessness and despair state. She was continuously remembering her mother as: "A purposeless woman with dreams of grandeur. My one want: to do work I enjoy –must keep clear of any confiding in mother: she is a source of great depression - a beacon of terrible warning". (Unabridged Journals, p.422).**

The moon is no door. It is a face in its own right,
White as a knuckle and terribly upset .
It drags the sea after it like a dark crime ;it is quiet
With the O-gape of complete despair. I live here. (ll.8-11)

The mimetic O-gape of the moon was "implicitly contrasted with the A-gape the Greek word for love, used for the love- feast of the Christians- that characterized, or should characterize, the church."[22] The visual pattern of the poem is arranged as: the shape of upright yew is the male and the round shape of the moon is the female. The moon was female symbol because of its passive sphere as it had not light of its own and shone only by reflecting the glory male sun light like Plath and Ted Hughes. According to Graves the relationship between moon and sun was:

…one succeeds the other in the Moon-woman's favour ,as summer succeeds winter , and winter succeeds summer; as death succeeds birth and birth succeeds death. The Sun grows weaker or stronger …but the light of the Moon is invariable. She is impartial: she destroys or creates with equal passion.[23]

The Gothic shape of the yew tree was counteracted by the maternal shape of the moon and reinforced the implication that

Plath aspired toward Christian belief and church. The color 'blue' described the robes of the moon which had affinity with Plath. In this way, she metaphorically gained the ideas and feelings which had connection with the moon. The bleakness of the graveyard was contrasted with the black yew tree and white moon. Eileen Arid stated:

"The Moon and the Yew Tree" visualizes the proximity of two worlds, the world of
absolute despair symbolized by the graveyard with its attendant yew tree and moon, and
the world of affirmation and tenderness represented by the church which ,although it has
some aura of coldness and stiffness, contains the effigy which 'gentled by candles' has
mild eyes.[24]

According to Plath's understanding ,the Moon was 'bald' because she was shiny. Bald was a full moon that was like the shiny pate of a bald person, a luminous but 'cold' and 'wild' unlikely to allow itself to be drawn on the walls of Christian religion. 'Blackness and silence' referred to Plath's indifference and impersonality towards her mother as represented by the moon. The symbol of the Moon- Muse underlined all the aspects of female identity particularly of the protagonist like the ova which seen to resemble moons 'bald and wild', the visual appearance of the moon itself is often invested with female attributes. In this poem as in Graves sense, Plath announced herself as a 'Muse poet' who was implying a personal mythology connected with the moon and associated herself with the white Goddess myth by the witch-goddess aspect as her Muse. She claimed that the moon 'bald and wild' was 'my mother' and that 'She is not sweet' and mild 'like Mary'. Here, she precisely presented Graves's distinction between the 'cruel, capricious, incontinent White Goddess and the mild ,steadfast , chaste Virgin. The kind of witch she used in this poem was a prophetic witch of death which found in her late poetry. Thus, the Moon –Muse of the late poems which related to Assia was not benevolent, it was a kind of witch that resembled the witch goddess Hecate.

Throughout manipulating the Moon movement and instability one may find Sylvia Plath's mythological concern with this phenomenon to give her poetry some sort of prominence and sublimity. The presence of the moon in her poetry was like the sun in landscape painting. Moon in her early poetry was always related to nature. For Plath, Graves's the White Goddess was her Moon – Muse which represent sterility, barrenness, rivalry, cruelty and indifference . The moon was always female and had a great connection to Plath's life as a female. Therefore; marriage and having children were the core of Sylvia's feminine side. The moon's phase became Plath's phases to represent her as a young girl, a pregnant woman, and a mother. Ted Hughes's betrayal had a great influence upon her late poetry especially that related to Assia Gutman. The Moon's luminosity pervaded her late poetry even where its image is not present. Undoubtedly, the use of myth in modern time as in the old ages became necessary to make life tolerable.

Actually, Sylvia Plath is clear and honest in her challenging explorations of mother- child relationships, deploring Gothic imagery and scenarios to search the splitting of the self to produce a new life and provoking the bizarre pretence of conventional responses to childbirth and the swaddled mother care.

Notes

[1]Lorna Sage, *The* Cambridge *Guide* to *Women's Writing in English*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p.501.

[2]Judith Kroll, *Chapters in Mythology*: *The Poetry of Sylvia Plath*, (London: Sutton Publishing, 2007), p.6.

[3]Ted Hughes "Notes on the Chronological order of Sylvia Plath's Poems" in *The Art of Sylvia Plath*. *A Symposium*, edited by Charles Newman (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1970), p.187.

[4]Lois Ames " A Biographical Note" in *The Bell Jar*, by Sylvia Plath (New York: Harper Perennial Modern Classics ,1999), p. 253.

[5]Peter Orr, ed., *The Poet Speaks*, (New York: Barnes & Noble ,1966), p.167.

[6] Karen V. Kukil, ed., The *Unabridged Journals of Sylvia Plath*, (New York: Anchor Books, 2000), p.183. All quotations and references to her journals are cited from this edition referred by the page number in the text.

[7]Ingrid Melander , *The Poetry of Sylvia Plath*: *A Study* of *Themes*. Gothenburg Studies in English 25, (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1972), p.67

[8] Sylvia Plath, *The Collected Poems,* edited by Ted Hughes,(New York: Harper Perennial Modern Classics ,2008),p. 112. All quotations and references to her poems are cited from this edition referred to by the line number in the text.

[9]A.E. Dyson," On Sylvia Plath" in *The Art of Sylvia Plath. A Symposium,* edited by Charles Newman (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1970), p.205.

[10]Ted Hughes, pp. 188-189.

[11] 'Le reeve ' is a painting by the French painter Rousseau in 1910 about a polish woman whom he loved , she was called "Yadwigh" . Melander, p.23.

[12]Kroll,p.17.

[13] Robert Graves's, *The White Goddess*: *A Historical Grammar of Poetic Myth*, (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1999), p.384.

[14] Ibid.,p.69.

. [15]Eileen Aired, *Sylvia Plath* (New York: Harper Row Publishers, 1973) ,p.104.

[16] Ibid.

[17] Kroll,p.69.

[18] Ibid.,p.34.

[19] George Steiner " Dying Is an Art" in *The Art of Sylvia Plath*. *A Symposium*, edited by Charles Newman (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1970), p.216.

[20]Sir James Frazer, *The Golden Bough*: *A Study in the Magic and Religion*, (Hartford shire: Wordsworth Edition, 1993), p. 279.

[21]Ted Hughes 193-194.

[22]Robyn Marsack, *Sylvia Plath,*(Buckingham :Open University Press,1992), p.160.

[23] Graves, p.386.

[24] **Aired, p.75.**

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